

INFORMATION REPORT

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CONFIDENTIAL

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SUBJECT The Serbian Orthodox Church

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25X1A

1. In December 1949 the authorities demolished an old Orthodox Church in Stari Futog, about 10 kilometers from Novi Sad. The dynamite used to demolish the church also rendered the stone useless for building a cooperative that had been planned. Similarly, in a village about 15 kilometers southwest of Novi Sad the local church committee was ordered to demolish its church and permit the material to be used elsewhere, while the Orthodox Church in Valjevo was destroyed under orders from the local government in November 1949. No church damaged during the war has been reconstructed and many damaged buildings have been torn down and the stone used elsewhere.
2. The Monastery at Ravanitza-Srem has been taken over for an orphanage; the Monastery at Beocin-Srem for a hospital for tuberculars. The Monastery at Gracanica, constructed in the 14th Century by King Milutin and particularly sacred to Serbian Orthodox communicants, is now a hostel for political meetings.
3. Church funds, including reserves for the payment of pensions, have been confiscated by the Federal Government. The Church is now making an effort to pay a small monthly sum to all former pensioners but priests have been forbidden to seek monies outside the church itself.
4. Seminarians, formerly excused from military training, are now forced to undergo military training at the normal age. The seminary buildings at Sremski Karlovci are now filled with soldiers; only one seminary, that at Prizren, is permitted to remain open for seminary functions. University of Belgrade regulations do not permit the granting of a doctorate in the Faculty of Theology. The building which formerly housed the Theological Faculty at the University has not been returned to the Church since the war.
5. Books dealing with theological subjects are no longer printed. During 1949, 2 numbers, instead of the normal 12 numbers, of the Official Gazette of the Orthodox Church were printed but only in limited quantities. The traditional pocket ecclesiastical calendars were still published in 1949, but only 100,000 in place of the normal 2,500,000.

CLASSIFICATION

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6. The Montenegrin Bishop, Joanikije Lipovac, has disappeared, together with many other members of the Hierarchy. Lipovac was known to have been in Arandjelovac at the end of 1945; nothing has been heard of him since that time. The Sarajevo Bishop, Varnava Nastic, was condemned to hard labor in a trial held during the summer of 1948; his beard, the symbol of his ecclesiastic rank, has been shaved off and during the summer of 1949 he was seen working on the Youth Railway project near Sabac. 25X1A
7. The Serbian Orthodox Church is particularly bitter over the preferential treatment accorded to Roman Catholic prelates and priests who are likewise prisoners of the present regime.

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